



# MICHIGAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

1390 Eisenhower Place, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108

Phone: (800) 242-8131 or (734) 929-6075 (Local) – Fax: (734) 677-2407 – [mpta@mpta.com](mailto:mpta@mpta.com) – [www.mpta.com](http://www.mpta.com)

DATE: Thursday, March 06, 2014

TO: Michigan Senate Health Policy Committee

Senator Jim Marleau, Chair  
Senator David B. Robertson, Majority Vice Chair  
Senator Rebekah Warren, Minority Vice Chair  
Senator Judy Emmons  
Senator Joe Hune

Senator Rick Jones  
Senator Tonya Schuitmaker  
Senator Bert Johnson  
Senator Jim Ananich

RE: Support Senate Bill 690 – Direct Consumer Access to Physical Therapy

Thank you Senator Marleau and members of the Senate Health Policy Committee for providing me this opportunity to speak in support of Senate Bill 690 which would provide the citizens of Michigan to have direct access to physical therapy services, joining citizens in 48 states and the District of Columbia who have already removed the out-dated provisions in their laws requiring referral by a physician for physical therapy evaluation and treatment. The first states to legislate direct access occurred 50 years ago – none have ever been rescinded. It is also noteworthy that the US Military started permitting direct access in the late 1970s.

Only Michigan and Oklahoma still do not allow direct access to physical therapy treatment.

My name is Sue Talley. I am a physical therapist, have been a physical therapy faculty member at Wayne State University for over 30 years (including 10 years as Program Director) and am currently the President of the Michigan Physical Therapy Association (MPTA). On behalf of the MPTA, I urge you to support direct access to physical therapy by supporting SB 690.

Direct consumer access to physical therapy would allow your constituents to seek the services of a physical therapist directly rather than first requiring a physician visit to obtain a prescription. Direct consumer access would allow patients to select physical therapy as their entry point into the health care system. Michigan citizens and members of the physical therapy community have been advocating this increased choice for over 30 years. SB 690 **does not change the physical therapy scope of practice**. This bill only removes a barrier and makes Michigan law accurately reflect physical therapist training and professional practice standards.

Over the past 12 months we have engaged and negotiated with physician groups to address concerns and to draft a compromise that the MPTA, the Michigan State Medical Society, and the Orthopedic Society support. Many thanks go to Senator John Moolenaar for his tireless and effective leadership through this process. The outcome of those workgroups and conversations is that **SB 690 provides direct consumer access to physical therapy in that no prescription is required for 10 visits or 21 days, whichever occurs first. In addition, SB 690 provides that no prescription is required for physical therapy services for injury prevention or promoting fitness.**



# MICHIGAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

1390 Eisenhower Place, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108

Phone: (800) 242-8131 or (734) 929-6075 (Local) – Fax: (734) 677-2407 – [mpta@mpta.com](mailto:mpta@mpta.com) – [www.mpta.com](http://www.mpta.com)

The evidence is clear. Direct consumer access has led to cost savings in other states – for both consumers as well as insurers - in an environment where health care costs are soaring. Fewer physical therapy visits are needed when consumers access physical therapy directly. A study conducted by the Center for Public Health Studies (University of Iowa) examined utilization of physical therapy between 2003 and 2007 (almost 63, 000 physical therapy outpatients in Iowa and South Dakota) found that patients who sought care from a physical therapist without a physician's prescription had fewer physical therapy visits than those who were referred by a physician. The authors conclude:

*"...our findings do not support the assertion that [patient] self-referral leads to over-use of care or discontinuity in care, based on a very large population of individuals in a common private health insurance plan with no requirement for PT referral or prohibition on patient self-referral. We consistently found lower use in the self-referral [direct access] group, after adjusting for key demographic variables, diagnosis group, and case mix. We also found that individuals in both groups were similarly engaged with the medical care system during their course of care and afterwards."*

In addition, direct consumer access to physical therapy decreases unnecessary physician visits when the only reason an individual schedules a physician visit is to obtain a prescription for physical therapy. Eliminating this visit saves the patient the cost of the co-payment and saves the insurance company the cost of the visit.

A study which analyzed 4 years of BCBS of Maryland claims found that paid claims for physician referred physical therapy were 2.2 time higher than paid claims for physical therapy attained through direct access.

United Healthcare, one of the largest health insurance providers in the country, now provides coverage for direct access to physical therapy in recognition of the cost savings that are being realized.

**Direct consumer access leads to fewer visits resulting in decreased costs and better outcomes.** A systematic review, published in January 2014 that concluded that

*"...physical therapy by direct access compared with referred episodes of care is associated with improved patient outcomes and decreased costs."*



## MICHIGAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION

---

1390 Eisenhower Place, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108

Phone: (800) 242-8131 or (734) 929-6075 (Local) – Fax: (734) 677-2407 – [mpta@mpta.com](mailto:mpta@mpta.com) – [www.mpta.com](http://www.mpta.com)

Physical therapists and physicians are an integral part of the health care team. Physical therapists have a long history of collaborating with other health care providers, including physicians. Direct access will not change this relationship; it would merely allow another access point into the health care system. The process of coming into agreement with MSMS and the MOS on a direct access bill for the citizens of Michigan points to our ongoing working relationship and collaboration..

On behalf of the MPTA I **strongly urge you to support SB 690**. Bring direct consumer access to physical therapy to Michigan to allow consumers better access, increased choice, and cost containment. This is good for individuals, this is good for health care and this is good for the State of Michigan.

And, let's not be last.

Sincerely,

Susan Ann Talley, PT, DPT, PhD(c)  
President, Michigan Physical Therapy Association